

# Inclusion

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Quarterly information provided by the  
Resource Center on Community Inclusion

June 2007

## *Inclusion Conference Successful*

The "Destination Inclusion: Are We There Yet?" Education Conference and Resource Fair was a great success overall. The event, sponsored by the Resource Center on Community Inclusion, Families Helping Families of SWLA, and the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities with funding from the Louisiana Department of Education, was held April 26 - 27, 2007 at the Isle of Capri Casino & Resort in Westlake, LA. Over 230 people including educators,



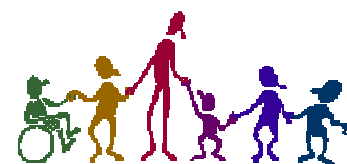
### **Keynote Speakers Dr. Rich Villa and Dr. Jacqueline Thousand**

administrators, parents, individuals with developmental disabilities and support services professionals from all over Louisiana were in attendance.

The Resource Fair included more than 35 agencies and providers from all over Southwest Louisiana who provided a variety of information about area services for individuals with disabilities and their families.

Keynote speakers were Dr. Richard A. Villa, Ed.D and Jacqueline S. Thousand, Ph.D, who co-authored Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education: Piecing the Puzzle Together, Second Edition which is our featured book on page 3.

Breakout sessions included the following speakers: LeeAnn Vaught, *Advocacy Center*, Debra Dixon, *Louisiana Department of Education*, Micah Fialka-Feldman, *Self Advocate*, Cindy & Bobby



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**"Ms. Thousand and Mr. Villa were the best inclusion speakers I have heard so far. They really knew their stuff."**

**"Bring back Villa and Thousand!"**

**"Just enough humor integrated with data."**

**"Excellent workshop—should be requirement for regular ed teachers and parish superintendents!"**

Arceneaux, Cindy is *Statewide Director, Project PROMPT*, and Toni Ledet, Ph.D., *Director, Children Services for Baton Rouge ARC*. Guest speakers also included Craig Blackburn, *Self Advocate*, along with Dr. Donna Wadsworth and Dr. Reed Rhodes.

*\*Quotes taken directly from conference feedback surveys.*

## Self Advocates—Paving the Way

*Article submitted by Wallace  
Johnson, Families Helping  
Families of Southwest Louisiana*

I am proud to say we had some great speakers who are self-advocates at this [Destination Inclusion] conference that really know what "Inclusion" is all about. Two speakers I am referring to are Craig Blackburn and Micah Fialka-Feldman. Craig and Micah shared with everyone their perspectives of what inclusion is and what inclusion is not.

Craig Blackburn is a motivational speaker with Down syndrome from our state who earned a standard high school diploma. Micah Fialka-Feldman is a speaker with a cognitive disability from Detroit, Michigan who is currently attending college.

Both young men have made great accomplishments even though they each have a disability. They are living proof that people with disabilities can achieve their goals and accomplish their dreams and be successful.

**"...we can say,  
'Yes, it is  
possible...' "**

Craig and Micah challenge us to re-think what people with disabilities are capable of. Through their accomplishments, we can say, "Yes, it is possible for self-advocates/people with disabilities to achieve success and greatness!" Their stories say, "Self-advocates can and are impacting our world and do make a difference!"

A group of self-advocates once said, "Nothing about us.... Without us....!" In essence, people with disabilities want to be included – if it is about me I want to be involved, I want to be a part of what is going on too, I have a voice, I want to be heard, I want to make a difference! I have something to offer! I have gifts, talents, and strengths to make a difference in our world now and for tomorrow!

owe it to yourself to attend their presentations! They are a must see for self-advocates, people with disabilities, their family members, educators and professionals who serve people with disabilities and their families!!

**"...to make a  
difference in our  
world now and  
for tomorrow!"**

Thank you Craig Blackburn! Thank you Micah Fialka-Feldman! You are self-advocates paving the way – making a difference in our world now and for tomorrow! Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your life legacy! Thank you for your visit to Southwest Louisiana!

For more information on Craig Blackburn visit his website at: [www.craigblackburn.net/](http://www.craigblackburn.net/) and for more information on Micah Fialka-Feldman visit his websites at: [www.danceofpartnership.com/](http://www.danceofpartnership.com/) or [www.throughthesamedoor.com/](http://www.throughthesamedoor.com/).



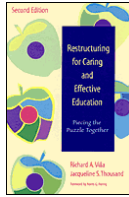
**Self Advocates Micah Fialka-Feldman,  
Craig Blackburn and Wallace Johnson**

Craig and Micah's presentations gave us all energy to hope and inspiration for people with disabilities that says, "Yes, I Can!"

If you missed our conference and you hear Craig Blackburn and Micah Fialka-Feldman are going to be in your area, you

## Featured Book Review

### Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education: Piecing the Puzzle Together, Second Edition (Villa & Thousand)



Reflecting the recent, extensive changes in special and general education, this new edition examines a range of timely topics as it explains the evolution of inclusive education over the past five years.

The reader will learn about:

- curriculum, instruction, and assessment in inclusive classrooms
  - strategies for collaborative teaming and co-teaching
  - ways to empower and motivate students
- a framework for understanding and facilitating systems change

Chapter-length case studies show you how a variety of districts have made inclusion work. Special "reflection" chapters provide firsthand accounts of how inclusive education

"This book should be read by all who are interested in forwarding the inclusive schooling debate to a further level. . . . It will help all to appreciate better what schools ought to be about." —*Australia and New Zealand Journal of Developmental Disabilities*

affects different members of the learning community. Throughout, the editors' perceptive writing clarifies the integral roles of students, faculty, and families in creating and maintaining inclusive schools and classrooms.

In this book, you will learn about: curriculum, instruction, and assessment in inclusive classrooms; strategies for collaborative teaming and co-teaching; ways to empower and motivate all students; and classroom management skills, including solutions for behavior problems.

### If you would like to submit an article to Inclusion 411...

Send to [RCCI@dhh.la.gov](mailto:RCCI@dhh.la.gov) for review. Please include your name, title, organization and contact information. The Resource Center reserves the right to edit submissions for grammar, libel or space and to refuse if not deemed suitable.

### Contact Information

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## Upcoming Events

June  
16

**"Rebuilding Our Dream"**  
**Family Empowerment Forum**—Metairie, LA

Sponsored by Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority, Families Helping Families, Jefferson Parish Public School System

For more information call (800) 766-7736.

## Perfect Treasures Social Events Lake Charles, LA

June  
30

**Picnic in the Park**  
University Community Center, 1001 Central Parkway, 11am-3:30 pm

July  
13

**Karaoke**  
Lock Park, 1535 Ryan Street, 6 pm-8:30 pm

Aug  
10

**Red Hot Dance**  
Lake Charles Civic Center, 6 pm-8:30 pm

For more information and to RSVP to any of these events, please call (337) 491-8730.



**Louisiana Disability Summit**  
**October 23-26, 2007**  
**"The Power of 3:  
Building Partnerships for  
Better Community Living"**

*Registration to be announced.*